A FAMILY STORY

WIDOW • MUGGINS' • OPPOSITION.

MEHITABEL MUGGINS, widow of Jethro Muggins, of Codfish Haven, was violently opposed to the very idea of her daughter marrying the red-faced, long-legged son of Thomas Jefferson Biggs; first, because she wanted to see her Angeline the wife of a rich man, and, secondly, because Thomas Jefferson, Jr., was not a rich man.

As an offset to this violent opposition on the part of the Window Muggins, Thomas Jefferson Biggs was ready at any moment to bless the union of the two loving hearts of Angeline and Thomas Jefferson, Jr., and Angeline and Thomas Jefferson, Jr., were already one in their hearty harmony with the views of Thomas Jefferson Biggs.

Thus do we find odds of three to one against the Widow Muggins.

"The very idee, Angeline," the Widow Muggins was saying, as she washed the dishes which Angeline wiped, "the very idee of your marrying Thomas Jefferson, Jr., is prepost'rous. Why, you ain't got a thing in the world to go on but a few clo's and a good constitution, and Thomas Jefferson, Jr., ain't much better off."

"Thomas Jefferson, Jr.'s, father owns the farm they live on, and it will come to him some day, mother," ventured the rosy-cheeked Angeline.

"And so do I own the farm we live on," said the Widow Muggins, with an air of aggressive pride; "and it will come to you some day; but what have you both got to go on now? Nothing under the blue canopy, and if you get married you'll have to go to the poor house or the orphan asylum, or, more like, to the lunatic asylum."

"Couldn't we marry and wait, mother?"

"Wait! Wait, for what? Wait till me and Thomas Jefferson Biggs dies? No, you can't. Who'd support you while you waited?"

"I can work, mother, and so can Thomas Jefferson, Jr."

"I see you working. You can work in my house, and Thomas Jefferson, Jr., can work on his father's farm; but do you think I want to take a son-in-law to raise and do you think I'm going to let you go over there and slave your life out for them Biggses! Indeed, I'm not, and if you get married at all, Angeline, with my consent, you'll marry a man that is able to support you and me, too, if I take a notion that I want to live with you."

"Maybe he wouldn't want you to live with us, mother," said Angeline, hesitatingly.

"Wouldn't?" sniffed the widow. "Well, I'd show him very soon whether he wanted me or not."

"Thomas Jefferson, Jr., likes you, mother," insinuated Angeline.

"And Thomas Jefferson, Jr., would like to live in my house. If he likes me so well, why doesn't he have a house where I might go if I wanted to?"

"He will have, some day, mother."

"Yes, and I'll be in my grave by that time."

"Oh, no, you won't," coaxed Angeline.

"Don't get to palaverin' now," snapped the Widow Muggins. "You can't wheedle me into givin' my consent to your marrying Thomas Jefferson, Jr., now, henceforth or forever. My mind's made up and will stay made up."

Angeline might have argued further, but all at once she glanced out of the door, dropped the teacup she was polishing, and, with a small scream, darted out of the kitchen into the house. It was Thomas Jefferson, Jr., within a dozen feet of the open door, and Angeline wouldn't have had him see her looking such sight for anything in the world.

Mehitabel Muggins looked hurriedly toward the door through which Angeline had vanished, and then toward the one which Thomas Jefferson, Jr., was approaching.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" she said, in a tone of welcome that Thomas Jefferson, Jr., was accustomed to.

"Yes'm," he responded, meekly, "How do you do? Where's Angeline?"

"That's more than I know. She went out of here without telling me where she was going."

Thomas Jefferson, Jr., stood in the kitchen door without the slightest expectation of being invited to come any farther.

"I'd like to see Angeline if I could," hesitated Thomas Jefferson, Jr.

"Didn't I say I didn't know where she was?"

"I guess that don't make any great difference in my liking to see her; would you think it did?" said Thomas Jefferson, Jr., stumbling awkwardly over the words.

"I was talking about you just before you come up," remarked the widow, veering from the subject in hand to a slight extent.

"I hope you was saying something good, ma'am."

"I was saying the best thing I could, which wasn't saying that you could marry Angeline."

"Pap said he hoped I would marry her," said Thomas Jefferson, Jr., throwing the burden on his father's shoulders.

"I'd like to know what you pap's got to do with it?" exclaimed the widow. "Is he running my family now?" she added, with intense irony.

"No'm," replied Thomas Jefferson, Jr., with meekness; "but he said he might as well begin now as any time."

"Oh, he did!" and the widow banged a saucer down on the table and broke it in two. "He did, did he? Well, you can go back and tell him that when I ain't able to attend to my own business I'll hire him as a hand to do the rough work. And you might as well tell him at the same time that if he thinks you are going to marry Angeline, you are very much mistaken.'

"Why can't I marry her?" asked Thomas Jefferson, Jr., with more courage than he thought he had.

The Widow Muggins looked him all over very slowly, very critically, very contemptuously, and with her nose turned up.

"You're a pretty looking thing to talk about marrying, ain't you?" she asked. "You are just like Angeline. All you've got is clo's and a constitution and no place to put 'em. You haven't got enough to pay for the license."

"But pap has," argued Thomas Jefferson, Jr.

"And so have I," asserted the widow, with the same old aggressive pride, for to her comparisons were odious, "but that's no sign you are going to get it. I won't have you in my house and——"

"I'll take Angeline home to pap's house," interrupted Thomas Jefferson, Jr.

"No you won't, either. I won't have my daughter slaving her life out for you and your pap, as you call him."

Over by the gate through which Thomas Jefferson, Jr., had come stood Angeline in a cool, white muslin and pink ribbons, as sweet as an apple blossom. She had arrayed herself and come

"OH, IT'S YOU, IS IT?"

out of the house by another door, and Thomas Jefferson, Jr., was to take her to a picnic down in the Haven woods.

"Good morning, ma'am," said Thomas Jefferson, Jr., when he saw her, and the abruptness of his parting almost made the cold chills run down the back of the Widow Muggins, for she had done what she could to avert this picnic in a ladylike way. Her efforts had proven all in vain, and as the two walked away she almost pawed the floor in her disappointment and anger, and there is no telling what would have happened before the day had finished if a vent to her surcharged feelings had not been sent to her by a kind Providence. It came about 3 o'clock in the afternoon in the comfortable person of Thomas Jefferson Biggs.

Thomas Jefferson Biggs, as may be inferred from the use of the word "comfortable" in describing him, was just the sort of a person that sort of an adjective would describe. He was comfortable; he had a comfortable farm, a comfortable house, a comfortable gig, a comfortable old horse to pull it, a comfortable appetite, a comfortable digestion, a comfortable conscience, a comfortable temper, and, unlike Widow Muggins, his life-long neighbor and friend, he had a comfortable time, for he took things as they came and gave them up as they went. He was a widower with no one to look after except his son, Thomas Jefferson, Jr., and he felt that he had ample cause to be satisfied and thankful.

The Widow Muggins sat on the stoop as he approached, but he did not notice the fire in her eye, and the red ring around her nose.

"Good day, Mehitabel," he said, cheerily, as he came up.

"It's anything but a good day to me," she replied, like a great dump of gray sky into a heaven full of blue.

"My, my, what's the matter? You and I ought to be the happiest people in the world."

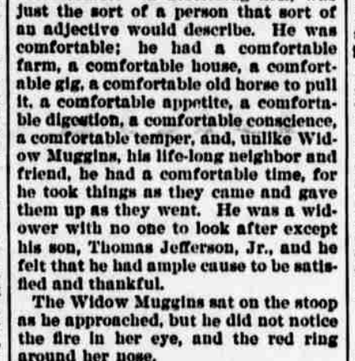
"Speak for yourself, Thomas Jefferson Biggs," she said, with an effort to maintain her good manners.

"Tut, tut," laughed Thomas Jefferson. "You need a tonic, Mehitabel. I'll send Thomas Jefferson, Jr., over with some that I have just had made by the herb doctor. It's guaranteed to make the sun shine on the cloudiest day of the year."

"Well, don't send it by that boy Thomas Jefferson, Jr.," she snapped.

"Why, Mehitabel, what is the matter with Thomas Jefferson, Jr.?"

"You know well enough, Thomas Jefferson," she half whimpered, and then she became strong and went on. "And right here I want to tell you, Thomas Jefferson Biggs, that that



"GOOD-DAY, MEHITABEL," HE SAID.

Thomas Jefferson, Jr., of yours shall never marry my Angeline. I have something higher for her, and I will never consent to her marrying against my will."

Mehitabel Muggins was tangling up her language, and Thomas Jefferson Biggs laughed.

"Oh, you may laugh," she went on, getting redder in the face, "but I mean just what I say. Angeline hasn't got anything to marry on, and Thomas Jefferson, Jr., hasn't, and I'd like to know what in the name of goodness they are going to do to make a living?"

"Work, Mehitabel," suggested Thomas Jefferson Biggs.

"Where'll they work?" she retorted. "I won't take no son-in-law to raise, and Angeline sha'n't go to your house to slave her life out for the Biggses."

"We might rent a small place for them, or buy it and set them up comfortably," said Thomas Jefferson Biggs.

"Then I'd like to know what's to become of me," almost sobbed Mehitabel Muggins. "I'm sure I can't live all by myself and let my only child go out in the world without my help and advice."

The widow was actually sobbing now, and Thomas Jefferson Biggs pulled a big red silk handkerchief out of his pocket and stuck his nose into it sympathetically.

"And think of me, Mehitabel," he said. "I, too, will be all alone, with my only child gone out into the world without my help and advice."

"I don't know what's going to happen," sobbed the widow, without any particular aproposness to anything.

Thomas Jefferson Biggs laughed and laughed so heartily that the widow loked at him in amazement through her tears.

"If I tell you how to arrange it all, so that Angeline and Thomas Jefferson, Jr., will have a home of their own, you will have a home of your own, and I will have a home of my own, and none of us will have to live alone, will you be satisfied?" he asked her.

"Indeed, Thomas Jefferson, I would," she said, after the manner of helpless women when relief is promised.

"Well, then, let Thomas Jefferson, Jr., move into your——"

"Didn't I tell you I wouldn't take any son-in-law to raise?" and she became aggressive again.

"Well, then, let Angeline come to my——"

"Didn't I tell you Angeline shouldn't slave her life——"

Thomas Jefferson Biggs laughed again, interrupting her.

"Very well, madam," said Thomas Jefferson Biggs, with great dignity, "there is but one course to pursue. You must come to my house and take——"

"Wha—wha—what do——," the Widow Muggins began to splutter.

"Charge of me," continued Thomas Jefferson Biggs, "and let the children take your house and farm. Then you won't have any son-in-law, and I won't have any daughter-in-law, but will all be one family, with Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Jefferson Biggs in charge of everything, and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Jefferson, Jr., as tenants."

Then Thomas Jefferson Biggs stooped down and kissed Mehitabel Muggins with a loud explosion, and as strange as it may seem to those who expected something more of a temper such as Mehitabel Muggins' she actually put her head down on the shoulder of Thomas Jefferson Biggs and felt comfortable for the first time since the departure of the late lamented Jethro Muggins, of Codfish Haven.—Washington Star.

Whiskers Under the Vest.

"Are beards lucrative, or, in other words, can one make any money by wearing them long?" said a young man about town. "Upon the first thought and perhaps even after one has evolved the question carefully in his mind, he would reply no. But they are wrong, as the following case of an old artist will show. By 'old artist' is not meant a genius like Harnet, Angelo or men of that class, but a painter who, besides being noted for his superior work in portraits, is conspicuous for the quantity of hair which sprouts from his chin. This gentleman, it is said, has won many a wager on his beard, which is of such length that he is compelled to wear it underneath his vest. No one ever sees the hirsute growth, except when he exhibits it to settle a bet. To saunter into a saloon and get into conversation with some of the customers there has become a hobby with him, for in doing so he has an object. He frequently gets a drink in consequence of betting with some other fellow who has a fairly long beard as to whose is the longest, and it is seldom that he loses a wager of this kind, for his whiskers extend to the bottom of his waistcoat."—Philadelphia Call.

Monster Water Wheel.

A water wheel of remarkable construction has been introduced in the North Star mine, Grass Valley, Cal. It is 18 feet in diameter, weighs 10,500 pounds and develops 250 horse-power, running under a 750-foot head, at 100 revolutions, and is directly connected to the shaft of a duplicate compressor, compound tandem type, of same capacity.

The design of this wheel is novel. From a cast-iron hub radiate twenty-four steel spokes, which are connected to a rim made up of angle buckets, properly shaped, having a slat for the buckets, which are bolted to the periphery, the strain being taken by four heavy steel truss rods.

The large diameter of the wheel is for the purpose of giving proper speed to the compressor under the high head available and the water is applied to the wheel through a variable nozzle, controlled by an automatic regulator, the latter maintaining a uniform speed on the wheel.—The Paper Mill.

Carved His Own Coffin.

A coffin yarn from England is this, from a Nottingham paper: "The hobby of an old gentleman, who has just departed this life in Duddiestone, was wood carving. Being of independent means he was able to devote his time to the craft and became a very artistic craftsman. After filling his house with hand-carved furniture he turned his attention to the carving of an oaken coffin, to contain his remains. Over the richly carved panels he spent much loving care. In this coffin de luxe he was buried the other day, and, in accordance with minute instructions in his last will and testament, was followed to the grave by one mourner only—a young man to whom he had left the bulk of his property, ignoring all of his relatives. The coffin was conveyed to the churchyard in the old gentleman's private vehicle, drawn by his favorite pony."

Singular Loss of Memory.

A curious instance of sudden loss of memory is reported from Brighton, England. While sitting on the sea front a woman felt something break in her head. She thereupon became unable to tell her name, address, or anything connected with her past life. She is at present in the Brighton workhouse, her continual cry being: "Oh, shall I get my memory again?" Her clothing does not contain a single mark or initial whereby she might be identified.

A Severe Criticism.

Probably no two artists ever criticised each other more severely than did Fuseli and Northcote, yet they remained fast friends. At one time Fuseli was looking at Northcote's painting of the angel meeting Balaam and his ass. "How do you like it?" asked Northcote, after a long silence. "Northcote," replied Fuseli, promptly, "you are an angel at an ass, but an ass at an angel."

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